

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

June 2019, Issue 278

Freehold and its Church

To paraphrase Snoopy: “It was a rainy, almost dank night in Freehold.” It was wet enough to cancel the proposed walk through Freehold but it did not stop nearly thirty from attending the June 10 meeting at the Freehold Congregational Church: Sharon Hempstead Pugsley, Rhonda Hempstead, Bunny & Phil Savino, Johanna & Robert Titus, David Tschinkel, Linda Berger, Charlene & Ken Mabey, Bob Shaw, Christine Mickelsen, Stephanie Ingalls, Paula & Jim Dwyer, Mary Lou Nahas, John Earl, Sharon & Neil Schoenfeld, Warren Eckler, Tom Teich, Dan Lerner, Kathy Smith, Don Teator and a few more who slipped through my memory and recording sources.

The purpose of the evening was **twofold**. The obvious reason was to present another worthy local history program. The second, somewhat distressing, was to publicize the help needed to aid the declining shape of the church building.

First, the history part.

Warren Eckler, local resident and church member, had crafted a **2,000 word story** of the Freehold Church back in 2012 upon the church’s bicentennial. It is a worthy piece, one that was researched from a file cabinet of church documents accrued over the years. I had edited the original version in half (perhaps more) for the evening, partially to balance the program and partially to spare Warren, although he certainly enjoyed fleshing out a few of the details—material I had not seen on his rough draft. I have included a

portion of the portion I edited for later in the newsletter. Anyone who wants the entire report, let me know and I can email it to you.

**Warren, thank you** for a local history project that I stumbled upon and am once again overjoyed to find people creating reports that can be used for future use. You created a short masterpiece that has not only created a history outline of the church but also reminded the community of our memories. (I am told that I was held by my parents during church services, left side, in back of Art Waldron and wife. If true, I was too young to verify but I think it is believable! ha) And I have talked with many of my Freehold contemporaries who remembered busier days of the Freehold Church during their youth.

The second part of the history part was a combined effort of **Tom Teich** and myself. Tom had scanned or photographed the older photographs hanging in the Freehold Country Store and in the Freehold County Pub, numbering almost twenty. Although Tom and I agreed that the proposed walk would have added to the program, many people were generally familiar enough with Freehold’s Main Street to enjoy the presentation.

Of course, the anchors of Freehold—the general store, the former turnpike inn, Doc Lacy’s house on the corner, the bridge over the Basic Creek, today’s Ruby’s Restaurant—are copiously documented in many of the photos, most of them preserved in the Historian’s files. Highlights included:

- discussion of how many different bridge structures we could remember

- the apparent two structure combination of the store
- the changing front façade of the former Freehold Country Inn
- the use of creek rock, placed end edge down, for the base of today's Rt 32
- how little unchanged the church seems from past photos (other than the iconic oak tree now gone)

**Thank you, Tom,** for your efforts in collecting these photos for the evening.

(I should also note that Tom is one of Northeast's most renowned landscape photographers, using a large format camera, operating his gallery on his property a mile east of Freehold, the products of which we can find online or by a visit to the gallery.)

The other part of the program evolved from a discussion that Tom and I had last year—what could be done to **preserve one of our area's landmarks**. Fifty years ago when 50-100 plus people would go to church, have fund-raisers, and otherwise maintain the church, no one foresaw the day when, as Warren put it, the church would return to its 1812 membership (when it started). Today, the couple handfuls of members cannot possibly maintain a structure of this scope. The roof, the steeple, the grounds, and on the list goes, is more than two or three able bodied people can do in their spare time. So, with the help of other friends and artists (the Savinos, Schoenfelds, etc.), a plan has been formulated to potentially use the church as a community asset, possibly as a cultural center. This is a big plan and needs people, money, time, and grants. For more information, contact Tom Teich. (teichthomas@gmail.com)

### **The July 8 meeting:**

The **July meeting** moves back to the Library, 7:30 as usual. **Flip Flach** will narrate a two part tale—one just outside of town limits but having consequences for the town, and the second a scattering of stories about Greenville.

Flip's ancestors settled in the Indian Fields area, now covered by the Alcove Res-

ervoir, an event going back ninety years—long enough to be almost forgotten by everyone except for those families that were affected. These stories, and the remnants left behind, were relived as Flip and his father would reconnoiter the boundaries of the Alcove before the complicated times of the post -9/11 era, and Flip will capture some of these stories for the evening's program.

Another part of Flip's talk will be the integration of stories from Indian Fields that relate to Greenville which will inevitably lead to regular Greenville stories, stories that were told by family, lived first hand by Flip, or heard second-hand, perhaps, from his business days in the Greenville Barbershop.

### **Other Notes:**

—Deb and I are back from four weeks in Italy – a long time, a good time, and good to be home. A small regret is to have missed Audrey's program. A couple of you requested a travelogue—let me ponder that one.

—Which reminds me to **thank Audrey** for preparing another program about Greenville through the lens of the Greenville Local. I am so pleased to see life continue in Greenville local history in my absence, even though I wish I had been here to experience the program.

—Our June program was the fifth program away from the Library. Some of you may have gone to most of the others: the Ellis/Hesel house on South Street, Sunny Hill Resort, Baumann's Brookside, and Pine Lake Manor. And there were a couple meetings whose dates were changed to combine with the Civil War Round Table.

—A **thank you goes to Stephanie and Christine** for providing the light refreshments I keep on promising in the newspaper press releases.

Take care,

From:  
**200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Freehold Congregational Christian Church**  
(greatly edited, even more so than the June program)  
15 Sep 2012 – by Warren Eckler

The Christian Church of Freehold was organized in 1812 under the leadership of Elder Jaspar Hazen who served as the congregation's first pastor until 1816. When Elder Hayes retired in 1816, Pastor John Spoor of Charleston in Montgomery County was asked to become Pastor of the Freehold Church, serving as pastor for forty years until 1856.

In 1822, a parcel of land was deeded for the current church site.

In September 1854, ground was broken for construction of the new (current) structure. The church was designed and built under the supervision of Mr. James H Hood. The black walnut was used on the interior of the sanctuary moldings, railings, pews and doors. The church bell was purchased from Jones and Hitchcock of Troy, New York at a cost of \$236.35 and it weighed in at 625 pounds. At today's prices, the Bell is now worth upwards of \$20,000 or more.

In December 1855, Mrs. Clough of New York City presented the church with its first communion service. This sterling silver set is presently displayed in the cabinet up here in the pulpit.

In 1856, during the last year of Elder Spoor's pastorate, while there were over 250 members in the church, the Sunday School was started.

In 1889, the vestry was constructed.

The church underwent its first major renovation in 1902 with the installation of the stained-glass windows in the sanctuary. The glass for all these windows was imported from Italy. Each window was given in memory of prominent people who had helped the development of the church.

In 1915, a glass lighting system was installed in the sanctuary to replace the kerosene lamps which had been in use.

Then in 1923, electricity came to Freehold and the church got wired into the system. All the kerosene and gas lamps were replaced by real electric light bulbs.

The year of 1947 and 1948 were marked by the acquisition of a new Hammond organ. (put up for sale in 2010 due to lack of use)

The culmination of the pastorate of Rev. Lynam was the purchase of the silver baptismal font and the oak pedestal upon which it stands in 1949.

In 1954 the kitchen was enlarged extensively under the supervision of the Ladies Aid Society including the adding of a second stove, a larger sink with bigger countertops, and also a pass through to the vestry for food when dinners were being served.

In 1966, a group built and installed storm windows over the stained-glass windows in the sanctuary.

The next big project was the building of the handicapped ramp in 1990.

On August 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene caused flood damage to our sump pump and furnace. As a result, we now have a new propane-fed hot air furnace.

In closing, in 1812 the church started with seven chartered members after building 500 members in 1819 and over thousand and 1832. The mother church in Freehold had 250 members under the pastorate of Elder John Spoor. Since then the church membership fluctuated up and down over the years and finally dropping to 15 in 1986 with eight regular attendees at Sunday services. In 2012, we have 23 members of which 8 to 10 regular attendees on any given Sunday.



Marion Winyall's map of Freehold, as remembered when growing up in Freehold, 1930s-1940s. (Could you do the same for your area?)

- Wood's Store
- 2 Herb Antus
- 3 side road into Andreatta's boarding house by the creek
- 4 Poole's
- 5 S. Edna Story – taught school there in Freehold for many years – grades 1-6. I went there my first three years.
- 6 Harry Levers & wife Natalie
- 7 School (fire house)
- 8 Alvy Sutton's garage
- 9 Sutton's home
- 10 Lacy's – Mabel and Roscoe – Janet – Calvin & Curtis
- 11 Anna Mae Scutt and Homer Adriance
- {12 Tunison's boarding house
- {13 Mangold's – Barabara Baron – later my father (Leon G. Hall) bought these 2 properties – there was a 2 lane bowling alley and a large dance hall / bar
- 14 Schofield's cider mill
- 15 Schofield's home
- 16 church
- 17 after the cemetery I'm getting vague
- 18 An older woman – a "Story", I think. also vague – for both 18
- 19 and 19 – maybe (Ed) Hempstead – Everett
- 20 John Calder
- 21 Annex to hotel
- 22 Jenny Park's Hotel
- 23 Clint & Gladys Story (George)
- 24 Story's vegetable stand
- 25 house gone now. May Bagly and Dr. Curtis Lacy
- 26 Lilis(sp) Lusk – house may also be gone – set back from road – was a bar
- 27 George & Emily Burdick – he was the town barber (Gus Spinner)

- 28 Not always lived in – no name comes tome
- 29 Ivan Goodfellow – just a shack – brother of Charley
- 30 Simpkin's farm – Lloyd & wife & mother Emma
- 31 Cliff Schofield's garage (Ruth)
- 32 Shield's Boarding house – Irene, Delores
- 33 Maxwell's -- Bill – Natalie
- 34 Stanley Munis(sp), large Victorian boarding house
- 35 Schaff – old man & wife
- 36 Schofield's house – usually rented
- 37 Leon & Marguerite Wood – where I grew up
- 38 Charley Goodfellow & mother – town photographer. He turned a strange shad of blue
- 39 Albert & Edna Morrison & four children – Eugene, Roberta, Eleanor & Winton
- 40 Pearl & Dorothy Howard
- 41 Alice & Lon Hale – the Palmers lived downstairs - on the ground level
- 42 Palmer's Souvenir shop – made them in the back. Burned many years ago
- 43 "Bunny" Palmer's barber shop
- 44 Phinney's ice cream, then a lane down to Hempstead's
- 45 Oldest house in Freehold – I have no name
- 46 Parsonage – Sion M. Lyman for as long as I lived there
- 47 Becker – Bud & Viola
- 48 Hanusic (sp) Farm
- 49 Cornell
- 50 George Allen
- 51 Witbeck's (telephone office
- 52 George Burdick's barbershop – he was way before Bunny Palmer. He had a pool table and parrot that swore – so when I would go there for my "dutchboy" cut – he would cover the bird cage and tell the men playing pool to watch their language!

This was pretty much the way it was from about 1930 – I was 3 – until 1948 when I (Marion) married and left. It was a great place to grow up and I remember it fondly – hope this adds something to your records!